

July 15, 2010

Dear Ms. Jackson,

I am writing to express my thoughts regarding Arch Coal's request for a permit to further mine Spruce 1. I grew up within 10 miles of the Spruce 1 site. I used to wade in those streams, hike in those woods, and bike along those roads. To allow Arch Coal to continue with this project is wrong on so many levels. Once the coal is gone (which will happen in a short period of time) the jobs created by the mine will be gone. The damage done by the removal of the mountains will irrevocably damage the wildlife, the water, the plant life, and the people who call that area home. The mine would provide a short-term solution to a long-term problem and would result in long-term negative consequences. EPA approval of Arch Coal's plan would be unethical and immoral.

I understand the need for jobs in that area. I am the granddaughter, niece, and sister of coal miners. My mother's first husband was killed in a slate fall in an uninspected and non-unionized mine. My grandfather fought the U.S. government in the coal mining wars on Blair Mountain in the 1920s. This site should be a national monument and not the site of MTR. I also know what the economy is like there now and I know how families suffer without the work provided by the coal companies. There is so much natural beauty and opportunity for outdoor recreation in that area. Why doesn't the Obama administration concentrate on creating and promoting a tourism industry in that area like we see in the Hawk's Nest/New River Gorge area or what we see in other states like Colorado? Why not pursue wind energy? When the mountains are gone there will be no place for turbines? These moves would create employment opportunities and boost the economy of the area.

I sincerely hope that this delay is not indicative of the EPA's intention to cave in to the coal companies and the politicians in the state of WV. Please do the right thing and veto this permit.

Sincerely,

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